

DELTA LEVEES PROGRAMS
SB 34 - SB 1065
APRIL 1993

The Delta Flood Protection Act of 1988, also referred to as SB 34, went into effect in March 1988. This bill created the Delta Flood Protection Fund and declared legislative intent to appropriate \$12 million per year over a 10-year period for flood protection in the Delta. SB 1065 went into effect in October 1991. This legislation served to strengthen the environmental mandate of SB 34 to ensure no net long-term loss of habitat resulting from activities funded under the SB 34 programs. SB 1065 also allocated \$3 million to the Department of Fish and Game to implement mitigation for past program impacts to habitat.

SB 34 outlines two programs to achieve flood protection for the Delta: (1) Special Projects for the eight western Delta islands and the communities of Walnut Grove and Thornton and (2) the Delta Levee Subventions Program. The funding is split equally between the two programs.

Major components of the Special Projects program are the rehabilitation of threatened levee sites, research into the causes of Delta land subsidence, and implementation of long-term island plans. Threatened levee sites on Sherman, Twitchell, and Bethel Islands, as well as sites on Webb and Hotchkiss Tracts, have been successfully repaired as part of this program. A \$5 million long-term plan for Twitchell Island has significantly reduced the probability of levee failure, while efforts are underway in a related program to significantly reduce subsidence and create up to 3,000 acres of wildlife habitat. Plans and specifications for rehabilitation of 5.4 miles of levee protecting the Town of Thornton on New Hope Tract have been completed.

Other aspects of the Special Projects program include (1) assistance to Bethel Island and Hotchkiss Tract to remove homes and other structures that have become buried in the levee or are obstructing levee improvements; (2) ongoing coordination with the Corps of Engineers' Long Term Management Strategy program for dredge material; (3) dredge material beneficial reuse demonstration projects on Twitchell and Sherman Islands; and (4) developing a better understanding of levee weaknesses and cost-effective design solutions.

The Subventions Program provides reimbursement to eligible local agencies for the maintenance and improvement of local levees in the Delta. This program was funded at the \$2 million level and provided for 50 percent reimbursement prior to the enactment of SB 34. Funding is now up to the \$6 million level and the reimbursement percentage has increased up to 75 percent.

DFG has specific review authority to ensure no net long-term loss of fisheries, riparian, or wildlife habitat. DFG is entering into routine maintenance agreements with these local districts. Work done in compliance with those agreements is eligible for reimbursement. Mitigation agreements are required for levee work that causes a net long-term loss of habitat. Mitigation implemented to compensate for losses of habitat resulting from reimbursable activities is eligible for full reimbursement under the Subventions Program.

SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA SPECIAL STUDY

BACKGROUND: The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Special Study is a joint study by the Corps of Engineers and the non-Federal Sponsor, represented by the State of California, Department of Water Resources and The Reclamation Board. The study was initiated in September 1991 with the signing of a cost-sharing agreement between the Corps and the non-Federal Sponsor for a 6-year study.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to identify problems and needs of the Delta and potential solutions for Corps assistance in the effective long-term protection of Delta resources. This special study will conclude with a Comprehensive Report that identifies the problems, needs, and potential solutions primarily for flood control, environmental restoration, and navigation, areas of primary Corps interest.

CURRENT STATUS: Studies underway include hydrologic studies, geotechnical studies, environmental studies, land use studies, potential flood damage studies, potential hazardous and toxic waste site studies, water quality impacts, cultural resources studies, engineering studies and environmental restoration studies. These studies are conducted primarily for the purpose of identifying potential flood control, environmental restoration and navigation problems/solutions and to formulate potential plans for possible Corps assistance. Future studies will be scheduled and conducted to coordinate with the plans and actions of the Delta Protection Commission, the Bay Delta Oversight Council, and other agencies and parties.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT: The current schedule for completing a Comprehensive Report, primarily for flood control, environmental restoration, and navigation, has tentatively been set for 1996. The comprehensive report will identify baseline conditions, future conditions, regulatory constraints, applicable State and Federal policies, and interested parties. The Comprehensive Report will provide an analysis of the flood control, environmental restoration and navigation problems of the Delta and identify site-specific solutions for potential Corps assistance.

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